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ABSTRACT

Prospective two-year college speech teachers need to be aware of the unique aspects of these colleges and the recommended preparation for teaching in them, which consists of general training in the field of speech--oral interpretation, public speaking, rhetoric, communication theory, interpersonal communication, debate, discussion, acting, play directing, and forensics--and in creative teaching methods, not research methodologies. Since 85 percent of the schools have speech and/or drama extracurricular programs, training should involve direction and participation in such extracurricular activities and programs. In addition, the well-trained community-junior college instructor's education should include work in program development for the culturally deprived, experience in working with minority groups, knowledge of language development theories, and exposure to the types of communication necessary for teaching students who are preparing for technical and occupational fields. (JM)

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TRAINING OF SPEECH INSTRUCTORS FOR THE COMMUNITY-JUNIOR COLLEGE

Roy M. Berko

"In March of 1930 it was reported by the American Association of Junior Colleges that there were 429 junior colleges in 46 states enrolling 67,727 students."[1] In 1968 there were 739 public junior colleges in the United States enrolling 1,810,964 students."[2] Public two-year colleges now enroll approximately one-third of the students in public higher educational institutions. If the present trend continues the number of students will increase until by 1975 one-half of all college freshmen in the country will be attending public community colleges.[3]

With the expansion of the number of community-junior colleges there appears to be a need to prepare instructors specifically for these institutions. The training for this type of teaching should have a different character from that followed in training four-year college and university instructors. In many instances the work of the first two years of a four-year institution is similar to that in a community-junior college; but, there are unique aspects in the two-year college of which a person interested in teaching at this level should be made fully aware.

It is generally recommended that individuals being prepared for community-junior college teaching be trained as generalists in the field of speech rather than as specialists in a specfic area of speech. A background in speech courses in the fields of oral interpretation, public speaking, rhetoric, communication theory, interpersonal communication, debate, discussion, acting, play directing and forensics directing will make the prospective

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teacher better equipped to handle the usual type of position open to him.

Since almost 60% of the two-year institutions have 3 or less full-time faculty members,[4] most of the instructors are called upon to teach any and/or all of the courses offered by a given school. In 10% of the two-year institutions only the Fundamentals course is offered, while in 71% of the institutions it is offered as 50% or more of the total speech courses.[5] The other courses offered by 50% or more[6] of the institutions are Public Speaking, Oral Interpretation, Debate, Introduction to the Theatre, Play Production and Acting.

The prospective instructor should center the major portion of his theoretical work on teaching methods rather than on research methodologies. Junior colleges neither require nor seem to encourage research; however, instructors should be capable of determining the needs of the student body and the needs of the community. They must also be able to use and apply the research done by others.

There seems to be little strong encouragement for doctoral degree holders among junior college faculty members. At present the minimum criterion for employment is usually a master's degree with a major in speech. There does appear, however, to be a need for more doctors on the two-year colleges' faculties.
The lack of advanced degree holders at the two-year level may in the past have centered on PhDs and EdDs feeling that two-year instructors had "graduated" from high school teaching, but had not matriculated to the lofty level of being a "four-year person".

This attitude appears tc be on the downward trend, with more and more instructors with doctorates attempting to secure teaching positions on the two-year campuses.

Some colleges and universities are starting to develop programs for the doctorate in speech (Doctorate of Arts) in the junior college (e.g., Northern Illinois, DeKalb, Illinois; The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan). It is recommended that the design of this type of program center on a specific major, in this case speech, with an interdisciplinary co-major or minor. Interdisciplinary courses should include work in sociology, psychology, human development, supplemental or remedial education, and teaching methods. Training should include an externship (similar to student teaching) on a junior college campus, and exposure to students in their present or future envircnments (e.g., by working with VISTA or VIA programs or being exposed to technical and career occupational situtations).

Specialties such as speech therapy, radio-tv, and rhetoric are not stressed in the junior college curriculum and, even if courses are taught, there appears to be little need for or demand for full-time specialists in those areas.

Special emphasis must be placed on ascertaining how to take subject matter and make it practical for the student so that his basic needs in the area of communication are satisfied.

Training for the junior college instructor should also include participation in speech and/or drama extra-curricular activities as well as training in the direction of speech and/or drama extra-curricular programs. Eighty-five percent of the schools have either speech and/or drama extra-curricular programs.[7] Many require that any instructor hired be qualified in taking the responsibility for one or more of the activities.

Preparation should also include examination of creative teaching methods. There seems to be a heavy tendency to use traditional teaching methods in the present programs and a need for infusion of some newer techniques as well as adaptive methodologies. Additional features of the well trained junior college instructor's education could well include: special work in developing programs for the culturally deprived; training in working with minority groups; language development theories; and, exposure to the types of communication needed for training students who will be entering technical and occupational fields.

Special emphasis should be placed on the selection of the professors who work with the future junior college instructors. Ivory tower philosophers who have no experience in, or at best cursory contact with the community colleges should not be responsible for the training of prospective junior college instructors. Only a working experience in the field prepares one for the unique problems of many community college situations.

"Within a few years, we can expect to find more students and more professors teaching in two-year institutions than in all four-year and graduate institutions."[8] If the speech profession is going to be ready with well-trained and professional speech educators to satisfy the needs of the two-year colleges we must take a look at our training programs and make the changes necessary to realistically meet the challenge of the present and the needs of the future.

ENDNOTES

[1]Bietry, J. Richard, "The Junior College in Relation to Speech Education," Quarterly Journal of Speech 17:202, April, 1931, p. 22.

[2]Harper, William A., 1968 Junior College Directory, American Association of Junior Colleges, Washington, D.C., 1968, p. 7.

[3]Richards, James, Rand, Lorraine, and Rand, Leonard, A Description of Junior Colleges, American College Testing Program, Iowa City, Iowa, 1965, p. 3.

[4]Berko, Roy, Speech Programs at Coeducational Community-Junior Colleges, ERIC, Los Angeles, 1971, p. 55.

[5] Ibid, p. 35.

[6] Ibid, p. 25.

[7] Ibid, p. 71.

[8]Clevenger, Theodore, Jr., "Column Two, A Survival Manual for the Speech Profession," Today's Speech 20:2, Spring, 1972, p. 7.